

TARENCE RAY: My name is Tarence Ray. I also work with Amy at Appalachian Voices. I live in Whitesburg, Kentucky. I'm here today not only as a current resident of Kentucky, but as a former resident of New Mexico, two states that have been significantly impacted by fossil fuel extraction. I grew up in Southeastern New Mexico. My grandfather worked for Chevron and Standard Oil for forty-two years. And my dad runs an oil field supply store called Heller-Phillips. The fossil fuel industry has provided for my family for decades, but this doesn't come lightly when I say that our country's approach to energy consumption must change immediately and drastically so that we may continue being international leaders in climate and clean energy. This is why I applaud the BLM's willingness to reform its Federal Coal Leasing Program. There are active coal mining leases on over 40,000 acres of public lands in New Mexico as well as several thousand acres of lands in Kentucky. These public lands should not be subjected to the profit-driven interests of private corporations. They should be turned over to communities and preserved for future generations. I firmly believe that reviewing the Federal Coal Leasing Program will uncover the true cost of fossil fuel extraction. These costs are often hidden from view, but many of us who live in these communities can tell you how much we really spend a year on things like bottled water and doctors' visits. Like Amy, I also have asthma from growing up in an extractive community and from having a family that worked in that same community. It really is criminal what these companies are allowed to do with this. And the two (Inaudible) in the federal government should be, I think, ashamed for having facilitated the destruction of some of these communities with this outdated and broken Federal Coal Leasing Program. States like New Mexico and Kentucky deserve a fair shot at a clean energy future. This review, this PEIS review, is an opportunity to make smart choices about the future of U.S. energy policy. It allows our states to plan in advance measures for keeping federal coal in the ground, and it encourages statewide shifts to low cost and reliable renewable energy. I urge you to listen to the demands of community members rather than shareholders and corporate lobbyists. We have been telling you for a long time, for decades now, about the true cost of fossil fuel extraction. For the sake of our planet's future, we ask that you listen to us.